

DREAMS OF INCREDIBLE WEALTH

The natural aristocrat in me
moves in that direction
like Nabokov's butterflies
unable to be else but precious.

Laziness, noble indolence
decrees effortless attainment,
a function of thoughtforms,
Egyptian practicality at its best.

Picture in your mind if you will
an enormous pile of cash
with me on top.

LE PATRON

"Ettore Bugatti n'est plus, mais Bugatti continue."

Bugatti, typical of genius, was obsessive and perfectionistic. He wanted to be an artist but recognized that his brother, the sculptor, excelled him in this. Unwilling to settle for second best he became an engineer.

At 18 in Milan he built his first car. Thereafter ensued an amazing variety of racers, midgets, tourers, the wonderful sky blue speedsters. He gained renown as an eccentric:

In an early photograph standing before one of his own machines with a funny hat on made from a bowler with the rim cut away. Flamboyant clothes, an aristocratic air. Touring the grounds on a bicycle of his own manufacture.

Molsheim was a marvel. More like a Baronial estate than a motorworks. All surfaces, even vices, were machined. The place was kept spic and span. He could not tolerate the abuse of tools. And he expected the utmost from his workers. But he paid them well and they, I am sure, bore a certain love for Le Patron.

A ripe setting for the ultimate, the type 41, La Royale. Of which 7 were made. 6 for the crowned heads of state, 1 for Bugatti himself. It was simply the biggest and the best car ever put on the road.

He put a Packard Eight body on the prototype and it became his personal car for everyday use. That way he could count himself among Kings. Until the day five years later on the French highway when he smashed it up.

RAYMOND LOEWY ASSOCIATES

These objects of outrageous design barely impinging upon the threshold of consciousness. What have we been all these years, blind?

It begins with a streamlined toaster found in the Goodwill. Then your mother's blonde Hollywood coffeetable. The flamingo print in the mirrored frame.

Soon you are buying books on Art Deco. You wonder if you have gone a bit mad. They're on the streets too! The "aircraft" look. Studebaker's same-coming-and-going styling, like Dr. Dolittle's push-you-pull-me. Then the big bomb, 54 Landcruiser, Stude's ol' bullethead torpedo.

There's something obscene and a little scary about it all. My friend Ron calls these nonsense artifacts of dubious origin Soinds. Who in the hell is Raymond Loewy Associates anyway?

JUNGLE MOTIF

A few simple decorating ideas
to give any home that special look
a seven-foot black leopard
poised atop the tv set
an Elephant House out back
for those long summer evenings
10,000 Zulus in the bathroom
admiring the plumbing
bound & gagged crocodiles in the broom closet
grass mats in all the guest rooms
so many house plants
you need a machete to find the front door.